



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Raising Awareness on World AIDS Day

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Every December 1 since 1988, World AIDS Day has been observed around the globe. As New York State's only openly-HIV-positive State legislator, and as the representative of a district that has one of the highest rates of known HIV infections in the country, HIV/AIDS is, for me, a daily concern. However, I recognize the importance of World AIDS Day in helping to bring the HIV/AIDS pandemic – and what each individual can do to bring an end to it – into focus for the wider public.

I participated in a number of events to mark World AIDS Day 2010. I helped ring the NASDAQ opening bell in honor of my recently enacted HIV testing legislation and one of its key proponents, the late Latino Commission on AIDS founder Dennis deLeon. Later, I participated in the launch of a new global initiative, "Hairdressers Against AIDS," which encourages hairdressers to make HIV/AIDS a topic of conversation with clients. And in the afternoon I joined the former St. Vincent's HIV/AIDS Center physicians, who have been absorbed by Mount Sinai Medical Center, at their World AIDS Day observation at the O'Toole Building on Seventh Avenue and 12th Street.

World AIDS Day events like these play an important role in raising awareness, but the work that must be done and the resources that are needed to stem the pandemic remain staggering. The fight against HIV/AIDS is one to which I remain committed on World AIDS Day and every day.